



**SENATOR  
SHIRLEY SMITH  
21ST DISTRICT**

**Committees**  
State Government Oversight & Reform -  
*Ranking Member*  
Finance  
Criminal Justice  
Public Utilities  
Agriculture  
Correctional Institution Inspection Committee

March 20, 2013

The Honorable Martin Sweeney  
President, the Cleveland City Council  
601 Lakeside Avenue, Room 220  
Cleveland, OH 44114

Dear President Sweeney,

As the state senator and representative elected to serve Glenville and Forest Hills, we are gravely concerned about the future of these two historic East Side neighborhoods. There are pervasive rumors that each neighborhood will be split between different wards during the upcoming redistricting process for the Cleveland City Council. We believe that such action would be damaging to the African American residents and businesses that have made these neighborhoods their homes, and it would be backwards for a city that prides itself on the strength of its communities.

Drawing new ward boundaries that dissect these neighborhoods would go against both tradition and common sense. Keeping neighborhoods whole maintains their integrity and identity. Residents and businesses know who is elected to represent them on Council and who is responsible for helping their neighborhoods grow.

Furthermore, it is important to make sure that representation of these neighborhoods organically grows from them. Long-time residents with experience and knowledge should be encouraged to stay and promote their communities in the local political process. Consequently, dividing neighborhoods reduces their ability to achieve positive outcomes for their neighborhoods. And without their experience and knowledge, a robust public dialogue is not possible; without a robust dialogue, progress cannot equitably be achieved in our city.

For these reasons, Glenville and Forest Hills should continue to be treated the same as West Park, Detroit Shoreway, Ohio City, Tremont, and other West Side neighborhoods, all of which are kept whole and represented by one member of Council.

We also know that we are not alone in our concern; numerous pastors and constituents have contacted us regarding this matter. We all believe that dividing these communities would drive a wedge between their past and their future.

Because of your busy office schedule and our required presence in Columbus through Thursday morning, we have so far been unsuccessful in scheduling a time to meet and discuss this issue. Because of the importance of this topic, we still hope to meet with you in person before the end of the week. Please do not hesitate to contact us as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

**Shirley A. Smith**  
State Senator, 21<sup>st</sup> District

**Bill Patmon**  
State Representative, 10<sup>th</sup> District

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